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ABSTRACT

An interview with Elise Boulding, a U.S. sociologist, concerning her views on peace education is presented. Dr. Boulding has undertaken numerous transnational and comparative studies on conflict and peace, development, family life, and women in society. She has taught at the University of Colorado and Dartmouth College and, at the time this interview was conducted, was Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association. In this interview, Dr. Boulding responds to questions about (among other topics) the concept of peace education, efforts towards peace education in the United States, and the role of the teacher in peace education. (DB)

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EDUCATION FOR WORLD CITIZENSHIP: PEACE LEARNING, EMPOWERMENT INTO ACTION, AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

Elise Boulding
and
The Project "Preparedness for Peace"

This miniprint presents an interview on peace education with Elise Boulding, USA. (Interviewer: Åke Bjerstedt.)

A sociologist with a global view, Dr. Boulding has undertaken numerous transnational and comparative crossnational studies on conflict and peace, development, family life, and women in society. She has worked internationally on problems of peace and world order both as a scholar and as an activist.

From 1967 until 1978 at the Department of Sociology and Institute of Behavioral Science, the University of Colorado at Boulder. Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Dartmouth College, from 1978 until 1985. – Professor Emerita. Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association. (Address: Box 327, Conflict Resolution Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, USA.) – The interview is reprinted from "Peace, Environment and Education", 1991, *2*(1), 34-46.

PEACE EDUCATION: A CONVERSATION WITH ELISE BOULDING

1.

ÅB: As an introduction, could you say a few words about yourself and your interest in "peace education"?

EB: I began thinking about the peace education field in the years when I was a mother and a full-time home-maker. We have five children and I spent a great deal of time with other mothers in our Quaker community in Michigan, talking about ways in which we could influence our children. What did we need to do as parents? What needed to be done in the community? What were we concerned about in the schools that would help our children grow up to be peacemakers?

Later when the children were grown, I went back to university and took a Ph.D. in sociology and then came to this problem area as a researcher and university teacher. But the most important influence I really think was when our own children were small, thinking about what it would be growing up in our country and how children could possibly become peacemakers in an environment that was so imbued with the cold war.

I had been a peace activist during the years our children were growing up, and part of my motivation in going back to the university was to understand how economic, political and social systems work, so that we could be more effective in working for peace. I was very aware of the limitations of demonstrations and peace marches and so on. I wanted to have a better understanding of the nature of the war system and the dynamics of creating a peace system.

My doctoral dissertation was on the effects of modernization on women's roles, and working on that problem led me to understand that the routes that women have travelled for participation in their society have been very different in different parts of the world. In my historical work on "The Underside of History" I go back and look at women from pre-history to the present and try to trace the kind of world that women had in different societies - nomadic, urban and rural. In the course of doing that I became very conscious that women's roles have tended either to keep the society going during a war or be involved in reconstruction after the war. To a very limited extent women themselves have been warriors, but their primary task has been

to keep the society going so it could fight wars. This is of course not a way that one likes to think about it, but it is in fact what women have done historically. That was one set of researches that made me very conscious of women's capacity for both violence and for nurturance. I became aware of the need consciously to make choices and to analyze one's role in the society to see the consequences of one's choices. That is something that women have not adequately done in the past. I think they are now much more conscious of the impact of the whole range of women's roles on the degree of peace culture or war culture that a society has. Many different studies I have done relate to that issue in one way or another.

Then I looked at child development and the possibility for participation of children in society. I have asked the same kinds of questions about children's roles that I have asked about women's roles. What in fact do children contribute to the shaping of the societies they live in? Again it is invisible. In most countries in the world, children enter the labour force at the age of four, that is they have to help in the family enterprise. In farming and nomadic societies there are important chores that small children do. In war time children become the maintainers of the society when the men are away and the women are overworked. Both war heroes and peace heroes are found among children. My book "Children's Rights in the Wheel of Life" documents a little bit of that - you might say it's the underside of history from the child's perspective rather than from the woman's perspective.

Then my work in translating Fred Polak's "The Image of the Future" from Dutch to English made me very aware of the role of images of the future held by both individuals and societies in determining what people do in the present - how they respond to their environment. I became very conscious that disarmament as a goal was accompanied by a complete inability to imagine what a society would be like and how it would function if in fact disarmament would take place. So in 1981, with a colleague Warren Ziegler, I began devising a type of workshop which takes people 30 years into the future and says: We are in a world now, in which there are no buttons for nuclear war: What does it look like? This is an exercise in free-floating imagining. There is also a very strong analytic component after the workshop members have made a fantasy visit to this future world. They must figure out in the analytic mode what are the kinds of institutions that would sustain the society they saw in their fantasies. This is an instrument I have used to empower people for action in the present. They have to imagine the history that would get them from

1988 to 2018 - something must have happened to get to this new situation! They invent the history, and then they decide: what should they do now that would help bring that world about? It is an exercise for empowerment into action.

I have also been very interested in the problems of religion. It is an intellectual challenge to understand the role of religion in society. I am very aware that religion has legimated and motivated war over and over again historically; and yet, religion is also the source of some of the greatest teachings on how to live without war.

2.

ÅB: What do you think of first when you hear the words "peace education"?

EB: I find the term itself evokes stereotypes in people's minds - as if there were some special course you could take. I prefer the term "peace learning" to "peace education". This shifts the emphasis to what goes on inside the learner rather than on something out there. (If you teach it right, people will understand what peace is and what they have to do.) So I have some resistance to the term itself.

ÅB: How would you then describe the area of "peace learning"?

EB: Partly I think of behavioral training, conflict resolution and so on, partly of understanding of the self, interpersonal dynamics, the integrity of individuals and of societies, and the need to respect people and work with them in ways that are mutually self-enhancing. I think that those are things that children can learn at a very early age. They can be put in very simple terms. You can teach very young children that if there is a conflict, then the only way to solve it is to make things better for the person you have a conflict with as well as for yourself. So there is a whole range of behavioral and perceptual things I include in peace learning.

Then I think, in a broader sense, we have to have a much better teaching of geography and history. Very few children in the United States have an adequate understanding of the world's geography, and they have very little understanding of history from the perspective of other cultures. For example, I find reading Islamic texts or world history is very rewarding in letting you see the world in a different way. Reading Chinese world history texts works in a similar way. I think we have to broaden our reading of history so we understand the human journey in much broader terms. Ethnocentrism is one of the major contributors to the building up of enemy images.

In my book "Building a Global Civic Culture" I have essentially put together what I have taught in peace studies classes. If you wonder what I think peace education is, try reading that book! Part of it deals with what I have just said - understanding history and geography better. I also put a lot of emphasis on understanding the complexity of interstate relationships. In the United States, we know about NATO and the Warsaw pact, but we don't understand the 2.000 different intergovernment organizations that do the work of the interstate system around the world. Even less understood and more important in the long run are the 18.000 nongovernmental organizations, which have come into being in this century.

What changed the world in the 20th century and will make the 21st century different, is the fact that people can develop and work for common interests across national borders independently of nation state policy. In the short run, these INGO's are weak. Very few of them have developed anything like their potentials, but in the long run I see a great hope in them. It's not what they are doing now, but what they *could* do that makes me hopeful. And they also *have* contributed very creatively, I think, to thinking in such areas as nuclear free zones, alternative security, non-offensive defense. Most activities in these areas come out of the nongovernmental organizations; that's where I look for solutions to our problems. I think students have to learn about that, and they have to learn to find their way around this meta network of 18.000 transnational networks.

In the United States, I have tried to use Unesco published books instead of the textbooks published in the U.S., so that students will understand the new international economic order, the new international cultural order, and the new international information order. These things are not reflected in stuff that's published in the U.S., so students usually don't get a proper chance to understand the present information order and the present culture. All of this to my mind is peace education.

3.

ÅB: If you think back of your own school days, were there some aspects in your schooling that might be considered an attempt at "peace education"?

EB: Because I was born in Norway and we spoke only Norwegian at home, I was very conscious that I was living in two totally different worlds. In school I learned that America was a great country, and at home I learned that it had a lot of faults. My parents were very critical - saw America as very

materialistic and so on. As a consequence, what I learned was not what I was being taught; what I learned was that I had to make my own judgements, my own evaluations. Neither my parents were right, nor was the school right. I had to make my own way. I think it can be a very creative experience to live with a culture conflict like that.

I lived in a factory town, and I learned that the teachers treated me very differently from the Hungarian and Italian children of the factory workers. My teachers kept talking about how superior Scandinavians were, which made me very angry; they didn't say that Hungarians and Italians were inferior, but that was a clear implication. So I saw first hand, without being able to name it as a child, what I now understand to be racism. It was a special ethnocentric bias, a pro-Nordic bias which was I think very damaging.

I was only three when we came over from Norway, so my entire formal education took place in the U.S. However, we never spoke English at home. I grew up in two different worlds: all of our family friends were other Scandinavians, but all my school life and my own neighbourhood life was with Americans.

4.

ÅB: Do you believe that schools in your country as you know them today contribute to a "peace education"?

EB: I think there is much more awareness on the part of *some* teachers than there was earlier, of the importance of changing the curriculum and introducing both skills of conflict resolution and more information about the international system from a broader perspective. When I was a child, it was mostly songs and dances from other countries that defined internationalism. Now it is much more understanding the nature of conflicts and helping children see the relationships to the larger world. Work on these issues has developed within COPRED (Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development), for example, in its peace education network, and within PEC (Peace Education Commission) of IPRA. These are both developments that I have been very involved in. I never was an elementary school or high school teacher, but I have always, ever since our children were small, worked with teachers and the schools in the communities we lived in to encourage them to do as much as possible with peace education. I am very happy that the National Education Association in the United States does take seriously some of that work. The National Library Association has peace collections in Public

Schools, and, of course, the Educators for Social Responsibility make important contributions. I think these are very healthy developments. I have done imaging workshops with many of these groups, and teachers use those techniques in their own classrooms.

ÅB: I think you indicated that *some* teachers show this growing awareness. So this is not a general phenomenon among teachers or teacher trainers?

EB: Well, I cannot say that I *know* this, but it's my *impression* that teachers tend to be representative of the average American. There is no elitist recruitment into public school education - if anything it is the contrary. So you have got a good middle of the road population, where some of them are responsive to peace issues, others not, but they can be led in that direction. I won't say that teachers as a group tend to be more hawkish than the general population, that's not true; but neither would I say they are more dovish. So they are a population that it is well worth spending time with. Think about what's going on in the schools of education where people like Betty Reardon have developed teacher training programs. There is an enormous openness to that, so there is a field that can be worked in. For classroom teaching a little work goes a long way; let me put it that way.

5.

ÅB: Do you think it is at all possible for schools to contribute to a "peace education"? If so, what are some of the steps and measures that can be taken that you think of first?

EB: An individual teacher who cares can do a lot in her classroom. If a system will adopt a special peace studies curriculum for the system, it's tremendous. My answer is always: Work at the level where you have the chance to work. If your only access to the school system is one teacher you know, then work on her or him. If you have a chance to influence principals, work on that. If you have the chance to get a school system to adopt a peace studies curriculum, try that. There is a lot schools can do, but it takes some small core of concerned individuals to start the process.

ÅB: You now talk about general steps and measures to get peace education going. If you think about the classroom level, what could the individual teacher do?

EB: There are parallels between peace education and feminism or working against racism. There is a way of teaching any subject that is respectful of individuals and their creative potential that has implications for peace. The

same is true for the way one treats women or members of other races. It is a way to teach and one should be sensitive to that. That is one thing. Another is, of course, a re-casting of conventional textbooks to point out the potentials for conflict and war or the potentials for peace-making. These subjects are not adequately treated in textbooks. A teacher should also set standards for behavior in the classroom; it is important how a teacher treats students and how she or he encourages them to handle their conflicts. Yes, there are many things that can be done right in the classroom. In addition, teachers' relations with the parents of the children are essential. How much trouble they take to make that contact differs widely.

6.

ÅB: What would be some of the possible differences in peace education approaches among younger and older students in schools?

EB: I had an interesting experience of spending a week in a private school in Chicago, where I went into every grade level from the 4-year olds through the seniors. The challenge for me was to find ways to deal with peace possibilities and hopes for a better future suited to each level. I tried very much to put myself, as far as I could, into the life-frame of the age I was with. Fortunately we have 15 grandchildren, so it wasn't so hard for me - the youngest is a year old and the oldest is 19.

For example, with the pre-school I used very simple concrete things, like showing them a stone. What could you do with a stone? Of course, you could pick it up and throw it at somebody. But the number of things those little children thought of to do with the stone were marvellous: drawing pictures with it, using it as a paper weight, making a sculpture with it - they had all kinds of ideas. So I pointed out to them that the difference between using a stone for peace work - to make other people more comfortable - or to hurt people wasn't in the stone itself - it was in what the child did. In such ways I tried, at every age, to think what kind of experiences they were having and the level at which they would be thinking. There are no age limits. You can certainly deal with these issues with 3- and 4-year olds.

7.

ÅB: If you were an upper-secondary school teacher in a subject in which you are particular familiar, how would you like to make the students more conscious of and more prepared for problems of peace, within that subject?

EB: If I were teaching in high school, I would be teaching sociology and what I would do would be to clarify the concept of interrelated institutions in our national society. First I would start with the local community, and in fact I have done this for high school students. There is a teaching project which Chadwick Alger, a former Secretary General of IPRA, has developed. It is called "Your community in the world, and the world in your community". This is something you can easily do with high school students, and I have also done it with my college students. You make a list with the students of all of the interconnections of your community with the rest of the world. That means listing all the organizations you can think of like the Rotary, The Chamber of Commerce and so on - all the nongovernmental organizations and the inter-governmental; the City Council may be member of an international union league of cities, for example; and then the businesses with their export relationships and the churches with their international contacts. Every church is a part of some kind of an international non-governmental denominational association. Then you send your students out - they pick the organization they want to study and then they go to the local group in order to find out how this is connected to the world. Then the class creates a map of the way in which their community is linked through the international system. The students talk with people who have been a part of that process, and they build up a picture of the inter-connectedness of the social, economic and political institutions of their society. That would be part of a course in sociology of the international system .

8.

ÅB: In international debates, the terms "disarmament education" and "peace education" have been used, in addition to some other related terms ("global education", "education for international understanding" etc .). Do you have any comments or preferences as to this terminology ?

EB: I have felt that "disarmament education" is a particularly unfortunate term because of its limited focus. I am more interested in education for a new understanding of security, education for world security. I prefer the term "global education". The trouble with "international understanding" is that we have used it for years and it has almost no content. There is nothing wrong with it per se, but with the way it has been used. I suppose I would say "education for globalism", related to the theme of my book "Building a global civic culture". "Education for world citizenship" is what I am interested in:

that every person should see herself as a member of the world community with the responsibility she has to the world as well as to the country she happens to live in and the community she lives in.

9.

ÅB: In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents and other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?

EB: Certainly we have many such difficulties in many countries. It depends a little on the community. In the communities our family has happened to live in, there has been less antagonism to it than in others, partly because they have been academic communities. There has been a university in the town, and that means that you have a somewhat more literate and liberal community. But I am very conscious of the people who are seeing a communist under every bed or behind every bush; I know what that is like. I think a very careful respectful dialogue has to go on with people who hold those attitudes. I think it's a great mistake to say: Well, let's go around and talk to people who will listen to me. A project in the United States, in which I am involved specifically pairs people with opposing views, hawks and doves, to see if there aren't some things they can agree on in common, in terms of social values that would be related to a security policy.

Another project in the United States, is called "Project Listen". You go to the people who are the most hostile to your values, usually about war and peace issues. You interview them and just listen to what they have to say; but you interview them in such a way that they kind of talk themselves around to seeing things in more depth than they did when they started. I think respect for the other person - willingness to take time, willingness to listen and then communicating at a different level than the highly confrontational one that usually is used, is very important. That kind of listening needs to be done, and it can be done. But it's very slow and it takes a lot of patience. We have in our culture in the United States a wish to get quick solutions to everything. The process I am describing takes a lot of time with no guaranteed outcome of a particular kind, except that you are just going to have better relations for getting on with things in the future. I think peace education needs to take more account of that kind of work.

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10.

ÅB: What needs to be done in teacher training in order to prepare future teachers more adequately for the area of "peace education"?

EB: Well, the things that I said before about what I would do in high school and the way I taught peace myself would be relevant here. "Building a Global Civic Culture" really is for teachers in teachers college, for use in teachers colleges and peace studies programs. Perhaps I should underline that teachers are not going into the classroom with any specific sensitivity or awareness that what they do relates to increasing the peacefulness of their society and the peace-making capacity of their students, *unless* that has been brought to their attention in their teacher training. The average teacher goes in neutral. Therefore it becomes very important to utilize the period they are in teacher training to heighten their sensitivity and make them realize that what they do in the classroom can make an enormous difference to the society itself and to the children that they teach.

11.

ÅB: Is there anything else that you would like to add about the school and peace education?

EB: A few years ago I published an article on peace education where I traced out what has happened in the field, going back as far as I can go back, also with references to the Peace Education Commission of IPRA. The one thing I became aware of, as I went over the materials, is that the peace education group were picking up the links between human rights and peace, between development and peace and the relevance of the situation of women, the whole feminist paradigm, the relationship of those things to peace, ahead of the generalists among the peace researchers. These ideas were first introduced in the Peace Education Commission, and then they spilled over in the general peace research area.

If a teacher takes seriously her role and has some research orientation, which teachers in teachers colleges are supposed to have, or if they are teachers in high school and they have a broader background for analysis, they can do much in this field of research and development - because they have to live and work every day with a whole complex of interrelationships to survive as a teacher. Because teachers are a very vulnerable and exposed group in their communities, they are perceptive of various connections, whereas researchers may just be looking at one particular aspect of things. At their

best, teachers really have very important conceptual contributions to make to the field of peace research as well as to education and learning. This is because if they are doing their job to its fullest, they must deal with inter-connections in a way university scholars and university teachers can avoid.

A NOTE ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

ELISE BOULDING: born in Oslo, 1920; B.A. in English from Douglass College, 1940; M.S. in Sociology from Iowa State College, 1949; and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, 1969. - The wife of Kenneth Boulding since 1941, mother of five children, grandmother of fifteen and a member of the Society of Friends.

From 1967 until 1978 at the Department of Sociology and Institute of Behavioral Science, the University of Colorado at Boulder. Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Dartmouth College, from 1978 until 1985. - Professor Emerita. Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association. (Address: Box 327, Conflict Resolution Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, U.S.A.)

A sociologist with a global view, Dr. Boulding has undertaken numerous transnational and comparative crossnational studies on conflict and peace, development, family life, and women in society. Her work in the area of future studies dates from 1961 when she translated, from the Dutch, Fred Polak's classic work, "Images of the Future". She has worked internationally on problems of peace and world order both as a scholar and as an activist. Dr. Boulding served as a member of the governing board of the United Nations University, 1980-1985; of the International Jury of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education; and of the U.S. Commission for UNESCO, 1981-1987. She has served as a member of the Commission of Proposals for a National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution, which resulted in the establishment by Congress of a U.S. Peace Institute in October, 1984. From 1984 to 1987 she served as Editor of the International Peace Research Newsletter. Other current international involvements include the World Order Models Project, the Coming Global Civilization and the Citizens Peace Treaty Project of EXPRO, Exploratory Project on the Conditions of Peace. From time to time, Dr. Boulding conducts workshops on Imaging a World

Without Weapons.

Elise Boulding has been a prolific author of books, chapters, articles and pamphlets during four decades. Here we can only give a few examples.

Examples of publications:

The effect of industrialization on the participation of women in society. (Doctoral dissertation.) Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1969.

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